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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Friday, July 31, 1931

(NOT FOR PUBLICATION)

Subject: "A Midsummer Luncheon Party." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D. A.

--ooOoo--

The nicest---the very nicest---summer luncheon I ever attended took place exactly a year ago today. I was back in the town where I grew up, visiting. And an old friend of mine who grew up with me gave this luncheon out in her back-lawn--buffet style. She called it a lawn luncheon, instead of a garden luncheon, because she said she really did have a lawn, but the only claim to a garden was a row of hollihocks against one wall. The lawn was lovely and there were plenty of shade trees under which she laid her table for six. A side table nearby held food and supplies. The luncheon, which my friend prepared and served all herself, was everything that a midsummer luncheon should be.

The menu was unusual. Though it looked rather elaborate it really was simple and easy to prepare and serve. As you listen you'll note how much of it could be prepared ahead of the guests arrival. It started with a chilled dish, continued with a most appetizing main course, and finished with that simple but most popular of desserts --- plain ice cream and chocolate cake.

For the chilled fruit cup, served first, four fruits were used -- honeydew melon, seedless white grapes, oranges, and white cherries. The color scheme, as you may have guessed by now, was green, orange and white. It was carried out not only in the food, but also in the attractive pale green china and glass, in the centerpieces which were low glass bowls of nasturtiums, and in the green linen luncheon cloths.

For occasions like this when a bit of style is required, one of those little tools that will cut fruit or vegetables in small balls is a handy thing to have in the top kitchen drawer. For the fruit cup, which I have been describing, there is the problem of how to serve the melon. You can dice it, of course, or you can give it more style and make it look different, by preparing it in balls. The fruit cup mixture can be prepared early in the day and set to chill and blend in flavor in the refrigerator.

I'll read the menu now for you to take down.

Chilled fruit cup; Spinach ring filled with creamed mushrooms and garnished with slices of carrot; Celery stuffed with pimento cheese; Potato chips; Crusty rolls; Ice cream; and Angel or Sponge cake with orange icing.

Let me repeat that menu once again. Chilled fruit cup; Spinach ring filled with creamed mushrooms and garnished around the outside with slices of carrot; Celery stuffed with pimento cheese filling. (See how the color scheme works out?) Potato chips. (Better make sure the chips are crisp by reheating them in the oven.) Crusty rolls; Ice cream; and Angel or sponge cake with orange icing.

There. That's the menu. To go with it we have two recipes. One for spinach ring, and one for the creamed mushrooms to fill the center. Spinach ring is a most attractive looking dish and suitable either for a buffet meal or a meal served family style. For a plate luncheon it would hardly do, since the whole effect of the ring would be lost in small servings. Before I start to read the recipe for it, let me remind you that it requires an aluminum or tin ring mold, either round or oval in shape. Oval is easiest to serve on a platter.

First we'll write the ingredients for this interesting recipe. No, Arabella, this recipe is <u>not</u> in the new cookbook nor is it in the old cookbook. It is a special recipe. So I'll read it very slowly.

2 pounds of spinach
2 tablespoons of butter
2 tablespoons of flour
3/4 cup of milk
2 eggs
1/2 teaspoon of onion pulp
1 and 1/4 teaspoon of salt -- or enough to season properly
1/8 teaspoons of pepper

That makes eight ingredients, doesn't it? I'll list them once more.(Repeat)

Wash the spinach thoroughly, remove and discard the stems, drain the leaves and chop them very fine. Cook them about 10 minutes or until tender, stirring constantly. Drain and press out some of the liquid. Prepare a cream sauce with the butter, flour, and the milk and stir until thickened. Beat the eggs until very light and pour the cream sauce onto them. Add the seasoning and mix the sauce with the spinach. Put the spinach into a well-greased ring mold and set this in a pan of water. Bake in a moderate oven for 45 to 50 minutes -- or until well set. Turn onto a hot platter and fill the center of the mold with creamed mushrooms. Around the edge of the ring arrange round hot buttered slices of boiled carrot. The slices are for color, decoration and flavor.

Now are you all ready for the second recipe? Creamed mushrooms. A short recipe, this is. Yes, and it <u>does</u> appear in the new green cookbook, so if you have your new copy, you won't need to take this recipe down. All you have to do is to turn to page 51.

For those whose cookbook hasn't yet come, I'll read the directions for creamed mushrooms.

You'll need for the creamed mushrooms

1 pound of mushrooms
Flour
2 tablespoons of butter

1 cup of rich milk or cream
Salt, and
Pepper.

Simple, isn't it? Just six ingredients. (Repeat.)

Wash the mushrooms, skin the caps, and cut the mushrooms in half or into several pieces if they are large, slicing down through cap and stem. Lightly flour the sliced mushrooms. Melt the fat in a heavy skillet, add the floured mushrooms, and brown delicately over moderate heat. As the liquid cooks out of the mushrooms, pour it off and save it to add later. When the mushrooms are well-browned, pour in the milk or cream, add the mushroom liquor, salt and pepper, and stir until the sauce is the right consistency.

That's all for today.

Monday we'll talk about camp cooks.